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ON PAGE A-33

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CIA Studies Turncoat's Soviet TV Appearance

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"If you are going to live in the Soviet Union, you have got to pay the rent," was the way former CIA director Richard M. Helms yesterday described Sunday's interview on Soviet television of ex-agent Edward L. Howard, the first agency operative to sell secrets to the Soviet Union and then defect to Moscow.

Howard, whose disclosures to the KGB about Central Intelligence Agency operations in Moscow are said to have left that station a shambles, has taken "the next step down the Soviet path," according to a U.S. intelligence source. He apparently has become a propagandist, and several sources said yesterday they believe Howard may turn up regularly to comment for Soviet television on U.S. affairs.

On Sunday, however, the 35-year-old former agent did not supply information trying to link U.S. journalist Nicholas Daniloff to the CIA as some U.S. intelligence experts, and Daniloff himself, had expected.

"They may not have worn him down yet," Helms said, observing that Howard "probably thought he could fence" with his interrogater during this first appearance in discussing anti-American issues.

The Soviets "probably took what they could get," Helms said, but added: "They will get him worn down eventually."

Helms called it a "bizarre interview" because Howard and his Soviet interviewer delved into such diverse areas as the reading matter of his former CIA colleagues in the Soviet section, the large number of CIA employes who are women, and because of the way he described Martha Peterson, a U.S. Embassy official in Moscow who was ejected by the Soviets in 1977 for what the Soviets described as espionage activities and who was among Howard's instructors during his CIA training days.

She "gave us lectures on how to conduct yourself if you are caught, what we were to do if apprehended by the KGB," Howard said. She "told us how she was caught by the KGB, and what had happened to her."

He added, "Now she is living quite happily. She is married and has children . . . [and] I think she is regarded with respect in CIA circles."

Howard made a point of stressing the unusual number of women in the CIA, saying that "a good quarter" of the Soviet section's employes were women. "I don't think that other intelligence services, although they make use of women, have as high a proportion," he said, adding: "I think these women in the CIA have more adventurist inclinations than ordinary women."

Howard identified the CIA's Soviet section as being made up of "hard-headed anti-Sovieteers," many of whom were either ex-military people or emigres from Russia.

However, when his questioner tried to say they were individuals whose parents had fled after the Russian revolution, Howard disagreed, saying there also were "those who escaped from the Soviet Union comparatively recently."

During the interview, Howard also refused to accept the long-standing Soviet theme that the U.S. Peace Corps, in which he served for two years, was a CIA operation. Although the interviewer described it that way, Howard said it was "not true" that he was in the CIA while he was a Peace Corps member.

Robert Gallegos, a former neighbor and coworker of Howard after Howard left the CIA and lived in Santa Fe, N.M., said yesterday that he saw some ironic changes in Howard's views as they were presented on Soviet television.

In 1985, Gallegos said, Howard asked him and his wife to look at the movie "Gorky Park" and had his own videotaped copy of a "Rambo" movie. In his interview, however, Howard criticized Americans whose knowledge of the Soviet Union came from "books such as 'Gorky Park,' " and described "Rambo" as a "rubbish" movie that creates aggressive moods in people.

The 50-minute interview is being studied by the CIA, sources said, for hints about Howard's state of mind.

Howard, who was trained to handle CIA agents in Moscow, was fired from the agency in June 1983, after failing a polygraph test. In less than six months he began selling secrets to the KGB.

Last month he turned up in Moscow.

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